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DAY LEAD ABEL
SOVIETS REVEAL ABEL WAS SPY

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MOSCOW, MAY 5 (UPI)--THE LETTER TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPER PRAVDA SAID, "THANK YOU, FOR THE RETURN OF OUR HUSBAND AND FATHER." IT WAS SIGNED, "MRS. R. ABEL AND DAUGHTER."

THE LETTER APPEARED IN FEBRUARY, 1962, AND PROBABLY MYSTIFIED SOVIET READERS. IT CARRIED NO MENTION OF MR. R. ABEL, WHO HE WAS, WHAT HE DID OR WHY HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER WERE GRATEFUL FOR HIS "SAFE RETURN."

ON MOSCOW TELEVISION YESTERDAY, RUSSIANS LEARNED PUBLICLY FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT R. ABEL WAS COL. RUDOLPH ABEL, A SOVIET MASTERSPY. TELEVISION COMMENTATOR SERGEI SMIRNOV DISCLOSED THAT ABEL WAS HONORED BY THE GOVERNMENT AFTER HIS EXCHANGE IN 1962 BY A "FOREIGN POWER" FOR AMERICAN U2 PILOT FRANCIS GARY POWERS.

IT WAS REVEALED THAT ABEL WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SOVIET INTELLIGENCE WITH REPORTS ON THE IMPENDING NAZI ATTACK IN 1941. ABEL JOINED THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN 1931 AFTER SERVING IN THE RUSSIAN SECRET SERVICE FROM 1927.

THE ONLY THING SOVIET VIEWERS WERE NOT TOLD YESTERDAY WAS THAT THE "FOREIGN POWER" WAS THE UNITED STATES, WHICH ARRESTED ABEL IN BROOKLYN ON JUNE 21, 1957, AND CHARGED HIM WITH HEADING A SOVIET SPY RING WHICH FOR 11 YEARS TRANSMITTED MILITARY AND ATOMIC ENERGY SECRETS TO MOSCOW.

ABEL, THEN 55 AND BALDISH, HAD BEEN OPERATING FROM A PHOTOGRAPHERS STUDIO AT 252 FULTON ST. IN THE SHADOW OF THE BROOKLYN FEDERAL COURTHOUSE. ON NOV. 15, 1957, AFTER A TRIAL IN WHICH HE DID NOT TESTIFY, ABEL WAS SENTENCED IN THE SAME COURTHOUSE TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON.

HE WAS DEFENDED BY ATTORNEY JAMES DONOVAN OF NEW YORK, WHO LATER WAS TO SERVE AS GO-BETWEEN IN THE RELEASE OF THE CUBAN BAY OF PIGS PRISONERS AND NEW HEADS THE NEW YORK SCHOOL BOARD.

AN UNIDENTIFIED GENERAL ON THE MOSCOW TELEVISION PROGRAM YESTERDAY RELATED DETAILS OF ABEL'S HEROICS IN BEHALF OF THE KREMLIN. BUT AT NO TIME DID THE GENERAL SAY ABEL OPERATED IN THE UNITED STATES.

POWERS WAS IMPRISONED IN RUSSIA FOR TWO YEARS AFTER HIS U2 PLANE WAS SHOT DOWN OVER RUSSIA IN MAY, 1960. THE SENTENCE WAS 10 YEARS BUT WITH DONOVAN AGAIN SERVING AS A U.S. EMISSARY, THE EXCHANGE OF POWERS FOR ABEL WAS ARRANGED AND ABEL WAS RETURNED TO THE SOVIETS VIA EAST BERLIN ON FEB. 10, 1962.

POWERS, THEN IN THE EMPLOY OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY (CIA), WAS RETURNED AT THE SAME TIME AND NOW WORKS AS A TEST PILOT FOR LOCKHEED AIRCRAFT ON THE WEST COAST.

THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY AWARDED POWERS A MEDAL IN A SUPER-SECRET CEREMONY TWO WEEKS AGO AT THE CIA'S HEADQUARTERS IN ALEXANDRIA, VA., THE NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE REPORTED IN A COPYRIGHTED DISPATCH TODAY. LIKE THE CEREMONY, THE TRIBUNE SAID, THE CIA MEDAL IS SECRET, IS NOT TO BE WORN AND THE RECIPIENT IS NOT TO DISCUSS IT.

CPYRGHT

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